1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 652 661 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country, though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in [575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 652 655 439 661 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[782 567] [2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.